2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6



to the aesthetic, their skill in dancing and dramatics is noteworthy: no one who has witnessed a native dance can fail to have been impressed by the performance of the participants and the stage-craft of the carpenters. The fact that no system of writing had ever been devised has prevented the establishment of a native literature, but the practice of passing down an extensive folklore by word of mouth shows their narrative powers as well as their faculty for remembering details. At present it is difficult to appreciate what must have been their energy in earlier times when they faced the struggle for existence, armed with stone tools. Abundant salmon gave them adequate food, but only when weirs had been built with great labour. Though game was plentiful, the hunter was equipped with nothing more formidable than a bow and arrow. The simplest task required patience and skill undreamed of by the average white man. If the reader will allow his imagination to carry him backwards two hundred years, he will realize that the mere provision of food and clothing necessitated constant effort and ceaseless exertion.

Hand in hand with many admirable characteristics, the Bella Coola display others which strike the white man as unprepossessing. A first impression is the untidiness of their houses. Exteriorly, they are often fairly neat, but confusion reigns within. Clothing, instead of being hung up, is left lying on the floor; bed-coverings are piled carelessly; dirty dishes cover the tables; dogs and children swarm over the floor; flies abound; all is dirty and slovenly. The house itself may be uncompleted; a window lacks glass and has been boarded up; the roof leaks, or the steps are falling down. Nor are the surroundings more attractive. There is one struggling flower-bed in the village, but elsewhere the houses are surrounded by wastes of mud where horses and cattle wander, dogs prowl, and children play. In the distance the mountain peaks rise in splendour, but near at hand all is squalid and unkempt.

They are only slightly more particular about their personal appearance. Dirt does not distress them. They wash occa-